

Application No. 10/002,772
Response to Office Action

Customer No. 01933

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

RE: THE CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Claims 1, 12 and 22 have been amended to more clearly recite the feature of the present invention whereby, for each part to be changed, a total quantity of the part to be changed is calculated based on the information on the apparatuses that require the part change, as supported by the disclosure in the specification at, for example, page 8, line 24 - page 9, line 5.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to the claims be approved and entered.

RE: THE CLAIM OBJECTIONS

In response to the Examiner's objections to certain claim terms as being indefinite or insufficiently defined, the following definitions in the specification are identified.

"Solution information" (claims 6, 17 and 27) is defined in the specification at, for example, page 7, lines 10-16 as information informing what solution should be taken when trouble occurs in the hardware of the product, and may include the nature

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of trouble, the object model, the version of the model, and the part to be changed.

"Information on an option configuration" (claims 8 and 19) is defined in the specification at, for example, page 6, lines 1 and 2 as "information representing what peripheral equipment is used."

"Information on a network configuration" (claim 9) is defined in the specification at, for example, page 6, lines 2-4 as "information representing what configuration the network has."

"Usage condition information" (claims 10, 21 and 29) is defined in the specification at, for example, page 6, lines 4-10 as including the number of times of use, the degree of concentration of use, information representing what condition the model is used in, and, for an image forming apparatus includes count data of printing and copying.

And "software version information" (claims 31-33) is defined in the specification at, for example, page 6, lines 11-17 as information identifying a version of the software, such as version information of a printer driver of the image forming apparatus.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the meaning of all claim terms is clear in view of the disclosure in the specification, and it is respectfully requested that the Examiner's objections to the claims be withdrawn.

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RE: THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 1, 4-12, 15-22 and 25-33 were rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by USP 6,333,790 ("Kageyama"). This rejection, however, is respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as amended hereinabove.

According to the present invention as recited in amended independent method claim 1 and corresponding independent system and program claims 12 and 22, in order to manage a change in hardware, a plurality of image forming apparatuses of a plurality of users are accessed through a computer network, and information on the apparatuses of the users, which comprises count data of at least one of printing and copying, is acquired. In addition, information on a part to be changed is acquired from image forming apparatuses that require the part change, and information on the image forming apparatuses that require the part change is generated based on the information on the apparatuses of the users and the information on the part to be changed. The information on the apparatuses that require the part change is provided to a terminal operated by a maintenance administrator. And, for each part to be changed, a total quantity of the part to be changed is calculated based on the information on the apparatuses that require the part change.

It is respectfully submitted that Kageyama does not at all disclose, teach or suggest the above described feature of the

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present invention as recited in amended independent claims 1, 12 and 22 whereby, for each part to be changed, a total quantity of the part to be changed is calculated based on the information on the apparatuses that require the part change.

Indeed, it is respectfully pointed out that the Examiner has merely identified portions of Kageyama that (according to the Examiner) correspond to the "accessing," "acquiring," "generating" and "providing" steps recited in claim 1, and it is respectfully pointed out that the Examiner has not addressed the "calculating" feature of claim 1 and corresponding system and program claims 12 and 22.

According to Kageyama, a system is provided in which a printer, which is instructed to print by a first computer, has a printer controller (which manages the individual printer locally) and a printer engine. According to Kageyama, the second computer is able to monitor information relating to the operating status of the printer, and can suggest ordering of a replacement part. In response to the suggestion, according to Kageyama, the printer controller/first computer can order the suggested part by transmitting an order to the second computer.

It is respectfully submitted, however, that the "third printing system" of Kageyama, as described in the disclosure cited by the Examiner at column 2, line 29 to column 3, line 3,

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merely discloses performing individual transactions with monitored printers. And it is respectfully submitted that Kageyama does not at all disclose, teach or suggest that for each part to be changed, a total quantity of the part to be changed is calculated based on the information on the apparatuses (that is, information from a plurality of apparatuses) that require the part change. That is, it is respectfully submitted that Kageyama does not at all disclose, teach or suggest calculating quantity information concerning a quantity of a part to be changed based on information concerning a plurality of apparatuses, for each part to be changed, in the manner of the claimed present invention.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claims 1, 12 and 22, as well as each of claims 4-11, 15-21 and 25-33 respectively depending therefrom, all clearly patentably distinguish over Kageyama, taken singly or in any combination with any of the other prior art references of record, under 35 USC 102 as well as under 35 USC 103.

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Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

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If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,

/Douglas Holtz/

Douglas Holtz
Reg. No. 33,902

Frishauf, Holtz, Goodman & Chick, P.C.
220 Fifth Avenue - 16th Floor
New York, NY 10001-7708
Tel. No. (212) 319-4900
DH:al
encs.